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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY DISCUSSES BILATERAL DIALOGUES,
MIL-MIL, BURMA, TAIWAN WITH LTG MA XIAOTIAN

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Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.
4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) May 11, 2008; 3:00 p.m.; Beijing, Ministry of National Defense, Ba Yi Building.

¶2. (U) Participants:

UNITED STATES

The Deputy Secretary

Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr.

Thomas Christensen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs

David Sedney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia

BG Charles Hooper, Defense Attaché, United States Embassy

Kaye Lee, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State

Ted Wittenstein, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State

LTC Jeff Louie, Assistant Air Attaché, United States Embassy

Roy Therrien, Embassy notetaker

James Brown, Interpreter

CHINA

Lieutenant General Ma Xiaotian, People's Liberation Army (PLA) Deputy Chief of the General Staff

Senior Captain (Navy) Guan Youfei, Deputy Chief, Ministry of National Defense (MND) Foreign Affairs Office (FAO)

Senior Colonel Huang Xueping, Deputy Director of American/Oceanian Affairs Bureau, MND FAO

Colonel Guo Hangwei, Executive Assistant for LTGEN Ma

PLA notetakers

Interpreter

¶3. (C) Summary: In their May 11 meeting, Deputy Secretary Negroponte and PLA Deputy Chief of the General Staff Ma Xiaotian agreed on the importance of keeping up the positive momentum on bilateral dialogues. LTGEN Ma said China is studying the U.S. request to hold the second round of Strategic Nuclear Talks in China in September, but expressed concern that the talks may be "a little repetitious" if held too close to the 10th round of the Defense Consultative Talks (DCTs) planned for the second half of 2008. LTGEN Ma noted that he looks forward to meeting with Acting U/S Rood in June for the Security Dialogue. Claiming the U.S.-China military-to-military relationship is "lagging" behind the political, cultural and economic relationships, LTGEN Ma called for an explanation of why 14 military exchanges to the United States in 2008 have allegedly been denied or remain undecided. (Note: DASD Sedney met ay 12 with the PLA to

clarify this issue.) LTGEN Ma said PRC relief supplies to Burma have been distributed to the people. He assured the Deputy Secretary the PRC will "do its best" to urge officials in Burma to receive U.S. relief supplies. Although the January and March election results in Taiwan "improved stability and relaxed tensions" in the region, LTGEN Ma said, "there is still a long way to go" for the two sides to establish genuine mutual trust and develop a structure for long-lasting peace. End Summary.

Importance of Expanded Dialogue

¶4. (C) In their May 11 meeting, Deputy Secretary Negroponte and PLA Deputy Chief of the General Staff Ma Xiaotian agreed on the importance of keeping up the positive momentum in bilateral dialogues. The Deputy Secretary, emphasizing the importance of exchanges at all levels, said more dialogue on all issues, especially security matters, is good for both countries. LTGEN Ma said that even though the United States and PRC sometimes have different strategic interests, with concerted efforts, "we will always find common ground, common interests." LTGEN Ma emphasized the importance of building personal relationships in the security field.

Strategic Nuclear Talks in September?

¶5. (C) The Deputy Secretary thanked the PRC for sending Second Artillery and Academy of Military Science representatives to the United States April 21-22 for the first Strategic Nuclear Dialogue. LTGEN Ma noted that the PRC is studying the U.S. request to hold the second round of Strategic Nuclear Talks in China in September, but expressed

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concern that the talks may be "a little repetitious" if held too close to the 10th round of the Defense Consultative Talks (DCTs) planned for the second half of 2008. The Deputy Secretary acknowledged Ma's concern but pointed out that Ma's own emphasis on building personal relationships might be best addressed by more, not fewer, discussions.

Security Dialogue Likely in Early June

¶6. (C) The Deputy Secretary noted that Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs Rood will be coming to Beijing soon for the Security Dialogue to discuss issues such as force modernization, transparency and space policy with AFM He Yafei. The Deputy Secretary said the United States hopes the PLA will take part in this dialogue and both sides can take the opportunity to delve into security issues in detail. LTGEN Ma noted that he looks forward to meeting with U/S Rood in early June at the Security Dialogue. (Note: The MFA has not yet formally accepted our proposal to hold the Security Dialogue in early June.)

Military-to-Military Exchanges "Not That Balanced"

¶7. (C) LTGEN Ma claimed the bilateral military-to-military relationship is "lagging" behind the political, cultural and economic relationships. Calling the relationship between the two countries' armed forces "very positive," LTGEN Ma specifically cited the "functional level" and "educational field" as areas for expanded exchanges. Noting the two countries already have a good framework for exchanges at the policy level, the Deputy Secretary called on LTGEN Ma to consider "opportunities for more junior officers to get to know their counterparts better."

¶8. (C) LTGEN Ma said that at the 9th Defense Consultative Talks (DCTs) in December 2007, the United States and China agreed to have 61 exchanges in 2008, 31 to China and 30 to

the United States. Since then, he claimed, the PRC has hosted "a dozen" exchanges, while the United States has only hosted four: the Strategic Nuclear Dialogue, a PLA military course and two cadet exchanges, one from the Nanjing Polytech Academy and the other from the PLA Air Force Academy. Of the other 26 programs, LTGEN Ma claimed 12 have been approved while the remaining 14 have "been declined or yet to be reported." LTGEN Ma asked for an explanation as soon as possible. The Deputy Secretary agreed that the United States and China should follow up at the working level to examine opportunities for exchanges.

¶9. (C) The PRC has hosted the "vast majority" of exchanges this year, LTGEN Ma alleged, and the PLA is "doing its best to accommodate" U.S. military visits. LTGEN Ma cited the visits of then-Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and CODEL Skelton to the Second Artillery Headquarters, "a place that had never been open to foreign political leaders before." He said the PRC allowed the current and former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mullen and GEN Pace, to see the Su27 fighter jet, T99 main battle tank, and China's "best conventional submarine, the 039 class." LTGEN Ma said that China gives much better access and shows greater transparency to the United States than it does to other countries. He noted that Central Military Commission (CMC) Vice Chairman Xu Caihou and PLA Air Force Commander and CMC member Xu Qiliang will travel to the United States this year, in addition to an exchange between the Presidents of each country's National Defense University and a PLA Military Region Commander visit to PACOM Headquarters. DASD Sedney promised to discuss LTGEN Ma's concerns in a May 12 meeting with his counterpart.

PRC Relief Supplies Getting to Burma

¶10. (C) Following the Deputy Secretary's query, LTGEN Ma said that PRC relief supplies to Burma moved in two shipments, one worth 4 million RMB (USD 571 thousand) and another worth 30 million RMB (USD 4.3 million). An assistant to LTGEN Ma explained that the first PRC shipment arrived May 3, with the PRC Ambassador to Burma on hand for the delivery. The General's aide claimed the supplies were given to the Burmese Government, then "handed out on the spot" to the people. The Deputy Secretary noted that the United States has relief

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supplies "for strictly humanitarian purposes" ready to go but has been unable to deliver them. The Deputy Secretary asked for PRC assistance in obtaining Burmese approval to deliver relief supplies, to which LTGEN Ma responded, "we will do our best."

Taiwan

¶11. (C) LTGEN Ma expressed appreciation for U.S. public statements on the March 22 UN referendum in Taiwan. LTGEN Ma said that the results of the legislative elections in January and the referendum and presidential election votes in March had led to "improved stability and relaxed tensions" in the cross-Strait region. There is "still a long way to go," he said, for the two sides to establish genuine mutual trust and develop a structure for long-lasting peace. LTGEN Ma expressed opposition to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, "especially of advanced weapons, like the F16 C/D." The Deputy Secretary stressed the U.S. commitment to its one China policy based on the three Joint Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act and assured LTGEN Ma that the United States acts responsibly.

¶12. (U) The traveling party cleared this cable.
RANDT